



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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September is National Prostate Cancer Month

Did you know one out of every six American men will get prostate cancer during his lifetime? In fact, prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in U.S. men, and South Carolina's rates of prostate cancer deaths are the third highest in the country. The SC Cancer Alliance has graded our state F for number of prostate cancer diagnoses, and F for prostate cancer deaths. As well, the health disparities in our state are quite alarming - African-American males are *three times* more likely to die of prostate cancer than white males. By the end of 2005, 4,210 men in our state will have developed prostate cancer and about 550 will die of this mostly preventable disease.

What can you do? First of all, know the risks. Your risks of developing prostate cancer are greater as you get older, if you have a family history of prostate cancer, or if you are African American. Another risk factor is diet. Eating a lot of red meat or high-fat dairy products helps to increase risks of getting prostate cancer, while eating grains, beans, and vegetables helps prevent it. Also, exercise may reduce men's risk for prostate cancer by 10 to 30 percent.

Prostate cancer can be successfully treated if detected early. The American Cancer Society recommends all men get tested for prostate cancer annually, starting at age 50, or earlier if you have high risk factors. For more comprehensive information, you can call the National Cancer Institute at 1-800-4-CANCER or www.cancer.gov. Knowing your risk factors, getting tested regularly when needed, and living well will help us reduce our unacceptable mortality from this disease and to help prevent unnecessary prostate cancer.

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The Healthy SC Challenge is an outcome-based, cooperative effort aimed at encouraging individuals, communities and organizations across the state to show shared responsibility in developing innovative ways to improve the health of South Carolina's citizens. For more information on the Healthy SC Challenge, please visit www.healthysc.gov, or contact Meghan McGuire at 803-737-2325.